

and fasten it at the back, making thus a dressy-looking fichu for summer morning wear or demi-toilette. Nothing, in truth, seems startling nowadays. Twenty years ago the style of dress now worn would only have been considered suitable for fancy balls, and ten to one their wearers would have been mobbed had they walked out in them.

Quite a new notion in Paris are the *Bébé* dresses, made just like a baby's robe, with the lace and insertion let-in in front, and a sash round the waist.

Short dresses for walking were worn at many of the French watering-places, but there is little hope of their being permanently adopted.

The Bréton style still holds good, and we have seen it charmingly combined with the Princess dress by letting-in the straight plain piece as the front breadth and front of the bodice in an ordinarily cut Princess, the only trimming being narrow box-plaitings of the material on either side. A simple dinner-dress in this style was made in white cashmere, with a very pale blue front. With a good paper pattern, it could easily be made at home.

For autumn wear there are many pretty mantles, which we may class under the head of mantles and jackets; the former still continue of the Dolman order, with simulated sleeves, or with short sleeves which are hardly longer than a cuff. In the jackets there are endless varieties; the newest closely resemble a man's frock-coat, very richly trimmed. Tailor-made jackets fit the figure, are deep in the basque, and are braided after any style of military braiding. A few open in the front with revers, but it is newer for them to button closely to the throat and have an upright collar, like uniform. Paletots are not likely to be abandoned, too many people possess them; but just at present everybody is trying to appear to have a good

figure, and the very best looks bad in the long ungraceful paletots.

The hair is still curled in front, and there is very little appearance of false hair being worn, which is sad for the hairdressers who have managed to secure from Circassian belles tresses of the extraordinary length of forty-six and forty-eight inches.

By-the-by, a new accessory to the toilette is the unbreakable dressing-comb; between the double layers of tortoiseshell which form the back, a sheet of metal is slipped, which comes half-way down the teeth, but is quite invisible; this would withstand any amount of rough usage and tangled locks.

A word as to stockings. Whether you choose for a dress apple-green, mandarin, cardinal, or any other vivid or notable colour, you must, *volens volens*, have your stockings of the same shade, or embroidered with the same shade; and if the toilette has two tints, these must both appear in the stockings. Stripes run downwards, and if you do not like flowers, embroidered butterflies and birds are seen covering the instep. No one wears cotton stockings now; the choice lies between Lisle thread and silk.

Hats like bells and thimbles are in vogue; the only choice seems to be whether they should or should not be tied under the chin. When hats and bonnets are trimmed with veils, the latter are made sufficiently long to twist round the throat. French *élégantes* affect yellow grenadine veils and trimmings, but yellow is not always becoming on this side the Channel.

Foulard petticoats trimmed with lace are replacing white cambric ones, but whether muslin, calico, or silk, they are all bedizened with lace; indeed, there seems to be but one desire in matters of dress—that plenty of money be expended—and most of the real happiness of life is sacrificed to this luxury of living.



## PETITIONS TO PARLIAMENT.



THE right of every British subject to present a petition to Parliament "is acknowledged," says Sir Erskine May, "as a fundamental principle of the Constitution, and has been uninterruptedly exercised from very early times." The system embraces, at the same time, very important and very trivial matters. The method of passing "Private Bills," for whatever object, whether for railways, canals, harbours, or other public works, or for the settlement of personal matters, such as in cases of divorce and doubtful marriages, as adopted at the present time, is really only a remnant of the ancient right of petitioning. Up to the great Revolution of 1688, this right was exercised only in

praying for the redress of grievances, or in asking favours and powers not otherwise obtainable. But, although the practice of Parliament in the reception and consideration of what are called Private Bills is really, at the present time, only a continuation of the ancient custom of hearing and acting upon "petitions," the reception of what are now generally referred to as petitions is a very different matter. Petitions in favour of, or against, certain public measures already before Parliament, or on matters of imperial policy, which could not at one time have been presented, are now showered down upon the tables of both Houses by the hundred. The House of Commons is generally the recipient of these documents, which, indeed, are so numerous that members both present

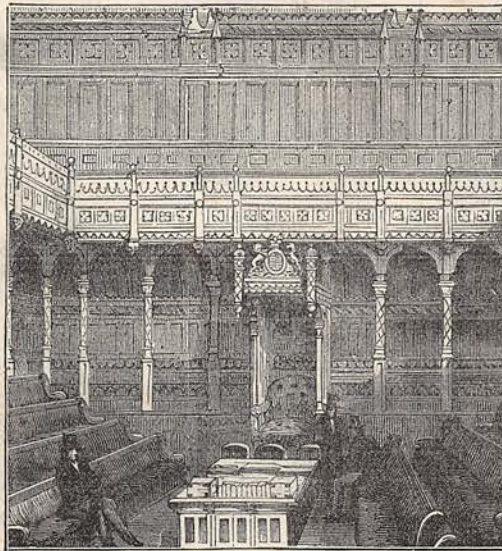
them and see them presented without much curiosity as to their contents. Scarcely a night passes without a greater or smaller number of petitions being placed on the table of the Lower House; and the Lords are not exempt. Very curious are the subjects referred to in many of these "prayers." Some time ago there was presented to the Upper House a petition from a meeting in London, praying "for the use by School Boards of books explaining the evils of tobacco." Whether the persons who signed the paper were sanguine enough to believe that their request would be acceded to, is a matter open to discussion. Not long ago, the "Ancient Order of Danielites"—a body, we believe, of very recent origin—petitioned that a new Arctic expedition might be sent out, the members of which should use neither meat, spirits, nor tobacco: and they expressed their opinion that such a crew would succeed in the enterprise.

The members of the Ancient Order of Danielites, whose petitions are always signed by R. N. Sheldrick, Chief Gardener, are fully impressed with the correctness of the views they entertain, but adopt rather a strange method of enforcing their general acceptance. In one petition they pray that "henceforth flesh shall cease to form a portion of the dietary of workhouses and gaols, and that wheatmeal bread shall be supplied to the inmates instead of white bread." This request seems to throw something of a doubt over the benefits derivable from the dietary which these enthusiasts recommend. If abstention from the use of flesh-meat is as beneficial as they represent it to be, they ought to be able to find some more worthy recipients of the advantage than those who fill our gaols. Perhaps, however, these unfortunates are considered an opportune *corpus vile* on which the experiment may be tried.

One enthusiastic Highlander has petitioned for the teaching of Gaelic in Scotch schools, while another prayer is in favour of the teaching of music in all School Board schools, as one of the ordinary branches of education.

But the subjects on which petitions are prepared

in the greatest profusion are those connected with such political matters as are engaging especial attention from time to time. In a recent session, for instance, nearly 9,000 petitions have been presented to the House of Commons alone. Of these, 984, signed by 134,398 persons, are against the proposal to open national museums on Sunday; 1,500 are in favour of the bills for prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sunday, and these bear no less than 260,999 signatures. These monster petitions are difficult things to manage, and if their contents are not always of great moment, the documents themselves are at least weighty. It is no unusual thing to see the united energies of several honourable members required to make these prayers ascend in due form to the table of the House. A short time ago Colonel Beresford presented no less than 200 petitions, bearing 50,000 signatures, against the proposal to open museums on Sundays; and one of these rolls measured 1,506 feet in length, and was subscribed to by 34,600 persons.



INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Much has been said from time to time about the "manufacture" of petitions; and that these documents are really always an index to public opinion is very doubtful. On the Eastern Question, for instance, the bare mention of which a little time ago caused a flutter of excitement, only ninety-one petitions, including those presented in special connection with Mr. Gladstone's famous resolutions, are recorded as having been received.

The infrequency of petitions relating to personal grievances is perhaps as good a proof as could be adduced of the general contentment of all classes in the country. When every man and woman, from the richest to the humblest, has the opportunity of laying his or her complaints direct before the highest tribunal in the kingdom, with the knowledge that they will receive the careful attention of a committee of that august body, and in all likelihood be printed, and so brought under the notice of those who are always ready to take up a "deserving case," it is at least a matter for satisfaction that it is so seldom that people avail themselves of this privilege.

C. E. F.

